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ABSTRACT

A review of the status of English language instruction in Morocco begins with an overview of the role of English in the society in general, and outlines the status of English use and instruction in the educational system at all levels (secondary, higher, vocational, adult, and teacher), the characteristics and training of English language instructors, the type and availability of instructional materials, educational administration and planning in relation to English teaching, English outside the educational system, British and other international support, commercial opportunities related to English instruction, language research, and other sources of information. While the quality of English language teachers and administration in Morocco is uneven, and English language skills are becoming less clearly related to employment prospects for graduates, demand for adult-level English instruction persists. (MSE)

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English Teaching Profile

Morocco

June 1987

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Arabic, the official language of Morocco, is widely spoken in a local dialectal form which differs considerably from the dialects of the Middle East. Classical Arabic is taught in schools and knowledge of written Arabic is increasing with the improvement of teaching methods. Berber is the language of much of the population outside the larger towns but has no official status and is not used as a language of instruction. French is the second language of the educated section of society and still widely used in business and administration. Official policy is to replace French progressively with Arabic.

1 Role and status of English

Although French remains the predominant foreign language, English is growing steadily in popularity with the increasing diversification of trade and political links, particularly with the United States. It is not used as a medium of instruction, except in isolated cases at the highest postgraduate level. Increasingly, however, a reading knowledge of English is being demanded of undergraduate and postgraduate students in the applied sciences - engineering, statistics, economics, agronomy and information science.

English is not used as a medium of communication within the country. It is considered an important lingua franca in dealing with other countries however, particularly in the fields of business and industry, science and technology, tourism and politics.

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2 English within the education system

Primary

English is not taught at the primary level in public education. However, a number of language schools offer courses for extremely small numbers of children of primary school age.

Secondary

Secondary education is divided into two cycles, the first lasting four years and the second three years. Entry to secondary education is competitive, as is continuation of studies into the second cycle. English is taught only in the second cycle (secondary 5-7), where it is described as the second foreign language (French being the first). Spanish and German are taken as alternative second foreign languages, but only by a minority of pupils (except in the former Spanish zone).

Pupils are streamed from secondary 5 with further streaming from secondary 6, and the place of English in the curriculum varies accordingly, from five hours a week in the Lettres Modernes stream down to two hours in some technical streams. In most streams, one hour a week is in half-class groups (the maximum number of pupils is twenty).

One highly selective stream, known as Préformation, for which pupils can take an entrance exam at the end of secondary 5, has eight hours a week of English in secondary 6 and 7.

English literature is not taught at secondary level, though simplified readers - when available - are part of the syllabus. The level attained is not sufficiently high to justify the study of literary appreciation, and the Official Instructions state that the language should only be taught as a means of communication.

English, examined until 1986/87 through the Baccalaureate (now abolished), is the object, like all school subjects, of continual assessment through termly exams from secondary 5 to 7, leading to a secondary school-leaving certificate (still unnamed in June 1987). These termly tests are supervised by regional Académies (exam boards) set up by the universities. It is expected that university entrance will be based on each candidate's academic profile as shown in the previous three years' performance in continuous assessment. Instituts supérieurs (the specialist tertiary institutions) organize their own competitive entrance exam (concours).

Syllabus and teaching methods are laid down by the inspectorate on behalf of the Division des Programmes, a subdivision of the Direction de l'Enseignement Secondaire. The official syllabus is a year-by-year listing of grammatical structures. However, as each new textbook appears in the Moroccan Steps to English series (see section 4 below), the former syllabus is in practice superseded by a statement of the year's work in relation to the new textbook.

The recommended teaching method (audiolingual, with some encouragement of communicative activities) was last set out, with the syllabus, in Anglais: Instructions et Programmes Officiels (1985). The model favoured by most inspectors is audiolingual, with the addition in the last two years of heavy doses of explicit language description. Given the steeply graded syllabus and, after the enthusiasm of the initial year, the pupils' uneven motivation,

the general level of achievement at the end of the three-year lycée English course has, in recent years, been decidedly low. However, Moroccan learners bring many advantages to the study of English, and a small minority of school-leavers reach an impressively high standard.

The secondary school inspectorate carries out its duties under the aegis of three different sub-divisions of the Direction de l'Enseignement Secondaire:

- The Division de l'Encadrement Pédagogique, for routine inspections and in-service training.
- The Division des Programmes, for syllabus, teaching methods and textbook production.
- The Division des Examens, for setting and marking the entrance exam to Préformation classes.

They also work to another department, the Direction de la Formation des Cadres, in running the CAPES (Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique à l'Enseignement Secondaire) examination for untrained graduate teachers (see Teacher-training below) and the entrance examination to the Centre de Formation des Inspecteurs.

In 1986/87 there were forty-three secondary-school inspectors of English (which included twelve women), of whom seven were Senior Inspectors (Co-ordinateurs). A majority have done TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) Diplomas or Applied Linguistics MAs in Britain in recent years, and new inspectors (selected by competitive examination among teacher applicants and acting inspectors) all do a British MA before completing their training with a second year at the Centre de Formation des Inspecteurs in Rabat.

Each inspector is assisted by a Conseiller pédagogique (teacher adviser), who teaches a reduced timetable and helps untrained teachers preparing for the CAPES inspection and teachers in need of remedial work.

Tertiary

There are English departments offering first-degree courses in the following Universities (starting with the longest-established degree courses): Rabat, Fez, Casablanca (Ain Choq), Marrakesh, Oujda, Meknes, Casablanca 2 (Ben M'sik), Tetuan, El Jadida and Kenitra.

In addition, there are departments teaching only English for other departments in the Universities of Agadir and Mohammedia.

The degree course, leading to a Licence in English or (in Rabat) in Anglo-Saxon Studies, comprises two cycles of two years each. The first cycle (years 1 and 2) is mainly language work, with some study of set books and 'civilization' (life and institutions). In the second cycle all students do the same third year course, which includes African literature in English; but in fourth year they opt for either the literature or the linguistics side. The former includes British, American and African literature, while the latter has courses in English phonology, syntax and sociolinguistics. In addition, all students do translation. All courses are taught in English, and each department chooses its own set books and textbooks and conducts its own examinations (written and oral). Fourth year students present a dissertation ('monograph') as well as sitting an examination.

The pass rate at the end of first and second year can be as low as twenty-five per cent and it is often only fifty per cent for third and fourth year. No more than two repetitions are allowed in years 1 and 2. Even so, graduates in English, annually (and by a widening margin) outnumber the teaching posts available, and other openings are difficult to find.

Vocational

Some twenty specialist training institutions around the country run English courses for their students in order to raise their level of comprehension to that required to cope with the increasing use of English-language textbooks, reference books and documentation. Among these are the Institute of Statistics (INSEA), the Institute of Agronomy (INAV), Ecole des Sciences de l'Information (ESI), the Ecole Mohammedia d'Ingénieurs and the Ecole des Mines.

Non-formal and adult

Within the state education system there is no provision for the teaching of English to adults.

Teacher-training

Lycée teachers of English are trained in the English departments of two institutions (as of 1986/87):

- The Faculty of Education of Rabat University (Faculté des Sciences de l'Education), formerly the country's first Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS), runs a one-year training course for university graduates.

- ENS Takkadoum (Rabat) also trains some graduates and in addition runs a two-year course (the Cycle Spécial) for students who have completed the first cycle of a university degree course and for teachers whose initial training was a two-year 'post-Bac' course in a Centre Pédagogique Régional (CPR). (The CPRs no longer train English teachers.) The Cycle Spécial gives equivalence, for salary purposes, with Licence plus teacher-training.

Entry to these training departments is highly competitive. All three courses lead to the CAPES.

Serving teachers who entered the profession as untrained graduates (which is now quite rare) can obtain the CAPES by passing a written examination run by the Inspectorate and undergoing a successful inspection.

In-service training for lycée teachers takes the form of full-day or half-day teachers' meetings (réunions pédagogiques), which inspectors organize at least once a term for teachers in their areas. Since 1983, the Ministry of Education and USIS (United States Information Service) have co-sponsored an annual Summer Institute of English, attended by 150-200 teachers for two or three weeks, with Moroccan, American and British training staff.

University teachers in English departments have either obtained a post-graduate qualification abroad (in Britain, America or France) or have taken a two-year third cycle course, known as 3e Cycle FF (Formation des

Formateurs). Serving teachers and new graduates could take an FF entrance examination in either literature or linguistics. Those who have completed the course successfully are posted to university English departments and given three years, while working, to write a thesis, which leads to the award of the Doctorat de 3e Cycle.

Teachers wishing to qualify for tertiary-level posts have also been able to do so by taking a Diploma d'Etudes Approfondies (DEA), a taught MA, as external students of the English Department in Rabat, after which they can prepare a thesis for the Doctorat de 3e Cycle. In 1986/87 a similar part-time course, with competitive entry, was opened at the Faculty of Education in Rabat.

Distance Learning

English language teaching programmes are broadcast by both radio and television. BBC English by radio and television supplies a number of radio series for broadcasting but the majority, and all the present television series, are American. However, the BBC series Follow Me is to be broadcast on Moroccan television in 1987.

3 Teachers of English

The number of lycée teachers of English was about 2,300 in 1986/87 (forty-five per cent of them women), of whom all but one hundred were Moroccans. This represents a tenfold increase in the English-teaching cadre over twenty years and a fall in the number of foreigners from a maximum of nearly 600 in 1978/79. The main sources for the rapid Moroccanization of English teaching were, until 1984, the English departments of the two Centres Pédagogiques Régionaux (CPRs) in Rabat and Casablanca, which gave two years' post-Bac training to future first cycle teachers (though in the case of English these teachers necessarily taught in the second cycle).

The CPRs no longer have English departments, and first cycle teachers of English are being slowly retrained as second cycle teachers in the Cycle Spécial at ENS Takkadoum (see above). But first cycle teachers of English still accounted for more than half of the total in 1986/87 and, understandably, their average language level is much lower than that of the trained graduate (second cycle) teachers.

The teaching cadre in university English departments has also expanded very fast and been rapidly Moroccanized. Statistics on levels of qualification are not available. A proposed new regulation - hotly contested at present - would require all university teachers who have not already done so to complete a doctorate within five years. This measure would not of course threaten the minority who hold American or British PhDs, but it would apply to all FF graduates (see Teacher-training in section 2) whose theses are still pending, as well as the university teachers with only an American or British MA.

The Moroccan Association of Teachers of English (MATE) has several hundred members drawn from the secondary and tertiary levels. It holds an annual conference at the end of the second term as well as regional meetings, and publishes a termly newsletter and yearly Conference Proceedings.

4 Materials support

Secondary

The national English Textbook Project has so far produced materials for the first two years of English as follows:

- Secondary 5. Steps to English (Librarie al Maarif, 1982) with Student's Book, Teacher's Book, and a Visual aid package.

- Secondary 6. Further Steps in English (Soden, 1986), with a Student's Book and Teacher's Book.

Ministry textbooks are put out to tender and published commercially within Morocco. These materials are not expensive. Audio-cassettes accompanying these books are available through the inspectorate.

The third book in the series, expected to appear in late 1987, will replace the books at present in use in secondary 7 classes, which are:

Byrne, D. Intermediate Comprehension Passages, Longman, 1971.

O'Neill, R. Kernel Lessons Intermediate, Longman, 1979.

Alexander, L. Practice and Progress, Longman, 1967.

Meziani, A., and Mouhcine, J. Have a Go! Rabat: SMER, 1982.

No separate textbook provision is made for science or for Lettres Modernes classes in the general lycées, or for the séries techniques in technical lycées. Préformation classes use textbooks of their teachers' choice.

When students were prepared for the Baccalaureate exam, Janet Mouhcine's Can I Help You? (SMER, 2nd edition 1986) was in widespread use in secondary 7 class as a supplementary practice book.

Pupils buy their own textbooks, often second-hand.

Universities

Book choice varies considerably. The normal practice is for each department, towards the end of each academic year, to give its list for the following year to a local bookshop. Books from British publishers predominate.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

The Focus and Nucleus series are used (in theory at least) in several institutes.

5 Educational administration in relation to English teaching

Overall responsibility for education is vested in the Ministry of National Education. It has three directorates dealing with primary education, secondary education, and higher education and scientific research. The Secrétariat Général co-ordinates and implements government directives.

The country is split into thirty-five provincial délégations, within each of which the Délégué is responsible to the Ministry for relations with schools on administrative matters only. As with all subjects, English has an inspectorate made up of inspectors appointed for each province. They are responsible for all pedagogical matters related to their subject, and the heads of schools have very little say in the syllabus or methodology of the subjects taught in their schools.

University English departments have considerable internal autonomy, but staff appointments are in the hands of the Ministry and of the Dean of the Faculté des Lettres in the university concerned.

6 Development and planning of the teaching of English

Unfortunately, the only statement of overall aims for lycée English teaching has been that of communicating with other speakers of English. Hitherto, the Textbook Project has stressed listening and speaking skills in its first two books. In the third book the emphasis will move heavily on to reading. It is likely that a substantial improvement in the average standard of school-leavers' English can be achieved by the end of the decade.

Until 1984 the majority of university graduates in English could find secondary teaching posts, and the main function of the university English departments was to turn out future teachers (though this was not reflected in their syllabuses). Since then, enrolment on English degree courses has continued to rise and, despite a very high failure rate, the number of new graduates increasingly exceeds the (now largely saturated) demand for new lycée teachers. Openings outside teaching have also become harder to find. The new phenomenon of graduate unemployment is not of course limited to English. It has resulted from the unplanned growth of higher education and, until 1987/88, the universities' unselective enrolment of Baccalaureate holders. At the same time the Moroccanization of the secondary teaching cadre and the slowdown in the expansion of the secondary system have severely restricted the recruitment of new teachers.

ESP is taught in a number of professional training institutions, the largest of which have their own planned syllabuses, appropriate materials and ESP-trained teachers. However, there is no co-ordination of ESP activities (which come under different ministries), no advisory service, ESP training or ESP-trained inspector; and it is likely that most of the smaller operations are in the hands of teachers (often part-timers) without ESP training or appropriate materials.

7 English outside the education system

Despite the interest in English there are remarkably few commercial language schools operating in Morocco. Those known to be in business at the moment are International House, the British Centre, and the English Institute in Casablanca, the International Language Centre in Rabat and the Tutor Centre in Agadir.

There are American Language Centers in Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fez, Tangiers and Tetuan, and a British Council Language Centre in Rabat.

The French Cultural Mission has primary and middle French-medium, fee-paying schools in a number of towns and full lycées in Rabat, Casablanca and Fez. The majority of pupils in all these schools are Moroccan and most learn English as

their second language (following Arabic) from secondary 3. As many of these pupils also attend language schools and spend occasional holidays in Britain, it is noticeable that a knowledge of English is becoming widespread among young members of the Moroccan bourgeoisie.

The only English-medium schools in Morocco are the American schools in Tangiers, Casablanca and Rabat. The last two have classes through all the grades of the American school system. Nearly half the pupils in these schools are Moroccans.

8 British support for the teaching of English

There are only a handful of British teachers working in Moroccan lycées. Between 1983 and 1986, however, the Ministry of Education employed a group of British and Irish teachers, varying in number from sixty-five to a hundred and fifteen in different years. In the university English departments there are still a few British lecturers on Ministry contracts (in Fez, Oujda, Marrakesh and Rabat), but the number has declined sharply in recent years.

The British Government works with the Ministry of Education to improve the teaching of English through:

- the provision of a member of the Key English Language Teaching scheme (KELT), who is a member of the Ministry's Textbook Project for English.
- the training of future inspectors through a programme consisting of one year's study in the UK followed by a year's practical work in Morocco.
- assisting MATE.
- training university English teaching staff, chiefly at doctoral level.
- the provision of Follow Me to Radio Télévision Marocaine.

The British Council's Direct Teaching of English Operation (DTEO) in Rabat is currently staffed by a mixture of full- and part-time teachers. It is headed by a London-contracted DTEO Manager, with seven full-time teachers, one of whom is London-recruited. The other six, with three part-time teachers, are locally-recruited. At the beginning of the academic year 1986/87, 755 students were registered at the DTEO. Of these, fifty four are children, attending classes once a week for two hours, the remainder are adults attending classes in the daytime or evening for three hours a week.

The majority of students are Moroccan, with a sprinkling of other nationalities. About twenty-five per cent of the Moroccan students are sponsored by their employers in both the private and public sectors. In addition, a substantial number of students are learning English under an ODA-funded scheme. ODA funds also support a teacher at ESI.

Cultural activities are not associated with the DTEO, which is situated approximately ten minutes' walk from the main British Council Library. All students of the DTEO, however, are automatically members of the main British Council Library and can attend the film and video shows which take place there.

Teaching at the DTEO is mainly at the lower levels as this is where demand is highest. About twenty students a year enter for the Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) and in 1986 there was a pass rate of 100 per cent. It is hoped that by June 1988 there will be students who are ready to enter for the Cambridge Proficiency Examination (CPE).

No other Council-employed or Council-sponsored ELT staff work in Morocco. International House, however, recruits from the UK for Casablanca; expatriate staff teach at the other language schools, usually on an hourly basis.

Availability of British teaching materials has been a great problem for students but the situation is now improving, with more bookshops opening which specialize in English language books. Such bookshops now exist in Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakesh and Oujda. The British Council Language Centre, by piloting new courses and asking the American Bookstore to order them, is helping to present a wider selection of British books to the public.

9 American support for the teaching of English

The Peace Corps maintains an active presence in Morocco, with over sixty volunteers engaged in English Language Teaching (ELT) in 1986/87. The majority work in lycées, but fifteen work in English departments in the newer universities, teaching both English for Other Departments (EOD) and regular courses in the first cycle of the degree course. Other ELT posts filled by volunteers are in ESP and regional resource centres.

USIS maintains contacts in all the areas that interest the British Council. Like the Council, USIS brings lecturers to Morocco and it also promotes the sale of American books. It is involved in several large programmes for financing Moroccan student visits to the USA. Recent political moves towards a closer relationship between Morocco and the USA have underlined the attraction of America to Moroccans planning further study in all fields, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and linguistics.

The American Language Center (ALC) in Rabat moved into new premises in January 1983, allowing many more students than before the opportunity to study English. Somewhat surprisingly, the ALC remains poorly equipped compared with the British Council Language Centre, and all its teachers are hourly-paid.

10 Other agency support

None.

11 Commercial opportunities

Moroccan publishers handle very little material in English, the major works being either ELT textbooks (Steps to English, Have a Go!) or glossy books aimed at the tourist market. All the major British publishers show an interest in Morocco, and ELT representatives in particular pay occasional visits to the major cities.

The four bookshops referred to in section 8 keep limited stocks of textbooks and prefer to order for a particular purpose. The demand for British books and materials has therefore to be created in the institutions themselves, the bookshops acting as import agents.

Once the third volume of Steps to English is published no foreign textbook will be considered for use as a main coursebook in lycées. However, there will be a demand for supplementary material, chiefly in the form of simplified readers.

Importing of either hardware or software is not easy and cassettes in particular, both video and audio, are subject to extremely close scrutiny. In 1987 it was impossible for the American Bookstore in Rabat to import any tapes to accompany published material. Video equipment is now available and the VHS system is most widespread, although the cultural centres of Britain, USA, Germany and France use Sony-U-matic, as do several tertiary institutions.

The new English textbooks for Moroccan lycées are accompanied by audio-cassettes, but in most schools teachers have to use their own cassette-players.

There is little sign, at the moment, of funds being made available to encourage demand for paid services from Britain in any other aspect of ELT.

12 Creative writing

The university departments of English occasionally produce a selection of the best student essays, but otherwise no creative writing is published in English.

13 Current research

Within the University of Rabat an Educational Research Institute (Institut Pédagogique National) conducts general educational research, including EFL, and research in English language and literature is conducted in a number of institutions at various levels.

University English departments

The 3e Cycle FF programmes in Rabat and Fez lead to the presentation of doctoral theses in these universities.

Faculty of Education, Rabat

A research project on Moroccan children's reading skills is being jointly undertaken with the University of Pennsylvania. Graduate teacher-trainees, at the Faculty of Education and at ENS Takkadoum, write a short research paper. The new 3e Cycle in Education will also lead in due course to individual research projects.

For the most part, the research in ELT reworks well-worn fields concerned with teaching various aspects of grammar, etc., in Moroccan lycées.

An informal link exists between the University of Rabat and the University of Strathclyde. Many members of staff of English departments have received training in Britain, notably at the Universities of Edinburgh, Wales, Leeds, Manchester and Warwick, as well as Christchurch College, Canterbury and Moray House College of Education in Edinburgh.

14 Bibliography and sources of further information

Published material

Moroccan English Inspectorate. Eléments statistiques relatifs à la composition et la répartition du personnel enseignant l'anglais. Librarie al Maarif. 1985.

Moroccan Ministry of Education. Anglais: instructions et programmes officiels. Librarie al Maarif. 1985.

Unpublished Material

A considerable amount of unpublished research on topics related to ELT in Morocco is to be found in the Faculty of Education library, Rabat, produced by students on the post-graduate TEFL courses.

15 General statement

Rapid secondary expansion until the early 1980s and the need to Moroccanize the teaching cadre undoubtedly led to the recruitment of many weak teachers. Retraining and the current recruitment of only well-qualified newcomers is slowly increasing the proportion of fully competent teachers. It is hoped that the new textbooks will do much to raise the quality of lycée ELT.

However, the English inspectorate has also grown very fast in recent years and is as uneven in effectiveness as the teaching body itself, with serious consequences for the quality of supervision and in-service work. Upgrading the inspectorate is probably the greatest priority for lycée ELT, and this is now being tackled through the programme at the Centre de Formation des Inspecteurs, which includes the ODA-funded year on MA courses in Britain (section 2 above). One problem is that inspectors are little better paid than lycée teachers and opportunities for promotion are few. The TEFL profession in Morocco is still quite young, but in the years to come a greying inspectorate with years to go to retirement could become a major obstacle to renewal and progress.

In the universities, as a dwindling proportion of graduates find employment related to their specialization, English becomes increasingly (in Galbraith's term) education-as-consumption and less and less education-as-investment. This reflects the crisis of the Moroccan universities in general.

Meanwhile, in recent years, demand by working adults for part-time English courses has held up, in spite of the fall in real incomes. It seems inevitable that a knowledge of English will become steadily more widespread in Morocco.

Chart of main Moroccan state educational institutions